

ABSTRACT

According to one embodiment of the present invention, a network adapter is provided that is used in the system to permit data communication among external data exchanging devices and an input/output (I/O) controller residing in the system. The  
5 adapter includes one or more interfaces that may be coupled to an electrical backplane in the system. The backplane is coupled to the controller, and is configured to permit communication between the controller and the adapter when the interfaces are coupled to the backplane. The adapter also includes an integrated switching system that has a first set of ports that may be coupled to the data  
10 exchanging devices and a second set of ports that may couple the switching system to the controller when the one or more interfaces are coupled to the backplane.

09877810-060704